THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY & THE OCCULT HIERARCHY

ANNIE BESANT D.L.

Price Two Shillings and Sixpence net

£4.00
out of print

Publicity Department
23, Bedford Square,
London, W.C.1.
Theosophical Society

HIGH WYCOMBE THEOSOPHICAL
LIBRARY.

No. 45 Ba 22

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/theosophicalsoci0000anni

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY AND THE OCCULT HIERARCHY

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY AND THE OCCULT HIERARCHY

THREE LECTURES DELIVERED IN THE KENSINGTON TOWN HALL, LONDON, TO FELLOWS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, OCTOBER 1925

BY

ANNIE BESANT D.L.

THE THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING HOUSE LIMITED
38 GREAT ORMOND STREET, LONDON, W.C.1

First Published in 1925

Printed in Great Britain by
UNWIN BROTHERS, LIMITED, LONDON AND WOKING

This being the first meeting of members after the anniversary of the President's birthday on October 1, 1925, *the General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in England tendered to her, on behalf of all present, warm and cordial good wishes and congratulations.*

LECTURE I

MR. GENERAL SECRETARY AND FRIENDS :—

I thank all of you very much for the way in which you have received and echoed the good wishes of your General Secretary to myself on my birthday. Frankly, I do not feel as old as I look, and I should not be surprised if I did go on a few years more before I have to say—not Good-bye, but *Au revoir*; because, for us, there are no real "Good-byes," unless you take the old beautiful meaning of those words: "God be with you." That we can always say to each other, but in the sense of Farewell there is no such separation for us.

Now I have taken for the subject of our thought, on which I am to address you, only one single title: "THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY AND THE OCCULT HIERARCHY. And my reason for doing that is, I think, fairly obvious. There is no subject more vitally important to us than a clear understanding of the relation borne by the Society to those great Guardians and Keepers of the Human Race in its evolution whom we speak of as "The Hierarchy." The word, of course, implies Government: the Government of the World. And in thinking of that in relation to the Theosophical Society, we have to try to understand very clearly what that relation was in the beginning of the Society; how it changed at a certain stage of the Society's life; and then, how far that relation may reknit, if so the Society will have it.

First of all, you may remember, with regard to the organisation of the Society, that it was organised in three distinct Sections: the First, the Second, and the Third. Those followed each other, as it were, in definite order. The members who came into the Society formed its lowest Section; those who passed on and became pupils of H. P. B., they formed the middle Section; the Masters themselves forming the highest Section of the Society. And that was its original Constitution; for H. P. B. never pretended that she was the real Founder of the Theosophical Society. She always spoke and thought of herself as an Agent of the real Founders; as Their Messenger; as Their Servant: her work in life being to proclaim Their existence and to bring about a closer relation between the Society and its real Founders. She left in her diary, as some of you may know, a note of the occasion on which she first met in the physical body her own Master. In 1851, her Master was over here in his ordinary physical body, coming here on a special mission and known to a very small number of people in His real character. She had seen Him astrally, as we call it—that is, when she herself was in the subtle body she had seen Him in His physical body—as others have done. Or, He sometimes appeared when she was in her physical body, in His illusory body—the Mâyâvi-rûpa—as it is called; but I am using the English term.

On this particular occasion the two, the Master and the pupil, met together in the ordinary body in which each was clothed; and she left in her diary the words that she had met Him in Hyde Park, "the Master of my dreams." That was naturally a marked incident, a wonderful incident, in her life; and she then was made to understand her life-work: to go out into the world where the great mass of the public knew nothing of the existence of this great Hierarchy,

and bear witness to the reality of Its existence and of Its work.

From that time onwards, then, we may think of her work as beginning, although in some ways years had to elapse before the definite public statement of her mission to the world was made; years of preparation, years of teaching, years of experience. And then there came the time when, having found her colleague, Colonel H. S. Olcott, the outer Society was definitely formed; just fifty years ago, founded in New York, the foundation of it going on really for a good many weeks, but the date on which it was finished, the 17th of November. From that time onwards, then, this Society has existed publicly in the world; and during the early years of its existence it was constantly directed and guided, through H. P. B., by her own Master and by Others taking part in the work directly with the Society. You can readily learn many details about that; I am only concerned to-night with the general principle: that the Masters were regarded by her and by a large number of the members as the Elder Brothers of the Human Race, making a great experiment—whether a Society could be founded and continue to work in which some of Them were Themselves members, and where they could direct its action and guide it along the road deemed by Them to be the wisest road for it to travel.

You may read much of these early days in books like *The Occult World* and Colonel Olcott's *Old Diary Leaves*, and still more intimately in H. P. B.'s own diaries, some of which are now being published in *The Theosophist*. It is in these that you come most closely into contact with our great teacher. And those who knew her while she was living in the physical body, are all well aware how continually she lived in touch with her own Master, and with one or two others of that august Fraternity. Some-

times in Europe, she came again into physical contact with some of the Masters who live on the Continent of Europe. Sometimes she would disappear for a few days and then return. Very few knew exactly when and how she came into physical contact with Those whom she regarded as Masters to be absolutely obeyed in every command, nay, in every suggestion that was made to her. And that intercourse, so far as she was concerned, did not cease, but went on to the last hours of her life ; but a break took place so far as the Society was concerned.

The older of you may remember that a considerable correspondence took place in *The Theosophist* of those days, under the title " Do the Brothers exist ? " A controversy as to the reality, as it was called, of Their existence ; as to the fact of communication with Them being possible. And there is always one peculiarity about communications that pass between those who are out of the body, as far as distance is concerned, even though living far away in their own bodies, as those we technically call " Masters " do ; always some doubt which is possible, a characteristic of all communications apparently between the different worlds : they can always be challenged ; always it is possible to find some spot in the evidence where it is not entirely convincing ; so that not only in the case I am dealing with to-night, but in any of those ordinary spiritualistic phenomena which have happened very largely, absolute proof is not obtained. One attempt I was thinking of at the moment, in regard to a circle of students who had witnessed some very wonderful phenomena at their séances, was with regard to the question : Would someone, able to do it, bring over a newspaper from New York of the date of the day on which it was received ? And that was a typical case. Many other such things have been tried and failed ; and it may be that the reason

for that is, a reason given in one of the letters precipitated to H. P. B., in which a Master said that: It was not desirable, as so many people wished, to give absolute proof of Their existence; in fact, He remarked, there were a number of people who would like to catch Them, and dry Them, and put Them in a museum with labels attached to Them; but They had no ambition in that direction, so far as They were concerned.

In all of those occult phenomena, as they are called, something more is wanted for certainty than the ordinary proofs in a scientific experiment. They are of no use, either mentally or morally, to the recipient, unless that recipient has the power of answering from within himself as the test of their reality. You must have a receiver with knowledge, as well as a sender with knowledge; for so great are the possibilities of deception, so many the tricks that can be played by all kinds of entities in the subtler world nearest to our own, that to base faith on those with regard to the great Realities would be to degrade those Realities, and to make them practically worthless when tested by the highest thought and intuition. That has always been considered to be true, by those who know something of the deeper Realities of the truths of the inner world.

Some of you may have read a story, of two great Hebrew thinkers, who were arguing with each other regarding some abstruse truth, not generally known. And one of these teachers, having some of the lower powers, made a wall fall down in confirmation of the truth of his statement. The other, looking at the fallen wall, said dryly: "Since when have walls taken part in arguments?" And that is the true view of the question. No physical phenomena, no so-called proofs appealing to the senses of man, can ever be accepted as proof of more than "this is another

happening." They cannot prove the great realities of the higher worlds; they should never be taken as a proof of the truth of spiritual knowledge or of spiritual power. And, as you all know, a time came when the reality of the belief of the members of the Society in the existence of the Hierarchy was put to the test.

Certain phenomena had taken place continually around H. P. B. in Adyar; and those phenomena were true enough. It is quite true that she could disappear when she was sitting in her armchair among a number of people surrounding her. They could not see her; five minutes afterwards they would again be able to see her. But what had really happened? By manipulation of currents acting in the ether, she had interposed, as it were, a layer of ether, which deflected the rays of light. You know how, if you change the medium through which the rays of light pass, by putting a stick into water, say, so that the part in the water is seen by a ray of light that runs through the water, what is the effect. The stick looks bent. But that does not prove anything with regard to the truth of a statement, and as you know how it happens, you would laugh at anybody who pointed to the bending of the stick and it becoming straight again as being proof of the value of his teaching! But that was exactly the kind of thing that happened in the disappearance of H. P. B. She put a veil of matter, different from that of the atmosphere, around herself, and so the rays by which her body was seen were deflected and, as they passed over the heads of the people, she became invisible. Because, as you very well know, our eyes constantly deceive us; and when we see a thing in front of us, as we imagine, we think that thing is really there. But that is easier from the standpoint even now of ordinary scientific knowledge; and to make a thing

invisible by interposing another medium, deflecting the rays upwards—and that was all H. P. B. did—did not prove that she was telling great truths and that you saw the Messenger of the Divine Wisdom. It only showed that she knew a little science—as she knew, indeed, a great deal—not yet easily to be manipulated by the scientific people of the time. And when it came to a question as to whether certain phenomena were true or deceptive, her own words were taken advantage of when she said: "I am only playing you a psychological trick!" That was literally true, and she meant people to believe it, because it was true. And yet they, in the plenitude of their ignorance, decided that she was a charlatan, on the ground that certain incomprehensible things had happened. And the events, called the Coulomb affair, practically marked the failure of the Society to have faith in the Messenger who had brought them the Light, who had changed the lives of so many by the Message that she brought from the Masters Themselves. And then people began to think in the Society: "Let us leave aside this idea of occult phenomena; let us confine ourselves to Philosophy, to Metaphysics, to things that we can argue over with our friends and decide by our reasoning faculties." They were afraid, many of them, of being laughed at. Some had a better motive; they thought the great Truths that the Society proclaimed would spread better if the occult side were hidden away with all its inevitable puzzles, its conundrums, which cannot be solved in ordinary ways. And so the question, of the existence of the Brothers, dropped out of sight; and, as H. P. B.'s Master said to her: "We do not impose ourselves on any." And then that Higher Section of the Society was withdrawn and the other two were left, the ordinary members and the pupils of H. P. B.

Then it was definitely said, and it is very often quoted—it was said by her that "The Masters no longer direct the Society." For all that the Masters can do for any of us is to give us opportunities. Not to force Themselves on the unwilling; not to give hints where the hints would be suspected; not to make statements which would be disbelieved by those for whose benefit they were made: and there comes then that period when the Society on the one side was only an ordinary society of students, proclaiming Universal Brotherhood, studying Comparative Religions, and trying to discover latent powers in Man and the hidden laws of Nature; and very much good work was done under those Three Objects; but the testimony to the existence of the Masters was no longer definitely made by the Society; no longer did it stand, as H. P. B. stood, as a witness to Their existence, for bearing testimony to the invisible world, to the truth of its connection with Those who guide the world, to the great Teachers of the Wisdom.

It is true that, in the great Scriptures of the world, man is told, from time to time, to "Seek the great Teachers!" Many of you will know that famous and often quoted phrase from one of the Upanishads, addressed to human beings: "Awake! Arise! Seek out the great Teachers and attend! For the road is narrow; verily, it is narrow as the edge of a razor." But though that cry may ring round the world, only few, even among the people to whom it was first spoken, really attended to it. Some there are in every Nation who grope and struggle to find out that Ancient Narrow Way. And those words, spoken by the Christ, as to the Straitness of the Gate and the Narrowness of the Way, and the declaration that "Few there be that find it"—those are mistranslated and misconceived by modern thought, twisted from

their real meaning—are practically identical with the old Samskrit words that I have just quoted.

But, as it was necessary that there should be some to bear testimony to the reality of this Hierarchy, this great company of the Sages and the Saints of humanity, taking a living interest in its evolution, in its progress towards the Light, H. P. B., as many of you know, for she published it in her *Key to Theosophy*, started what was called the Esoteric Section. "To do," she said, "what the Theosophical Society has failed to do." And that was what had been the Middle Section, her pupils, carried out to a wider circle in order that there might be numbers of people, at this stage of the world's evolution, who should gradually come into touch with the great Teachers of the world, as in the earlier days of human life and of human evolution.

Take her great work, *The Secret Doctrine*, and you will find on every page practically of the Commentary on the "Stanzas of Dzyan," statements with regard to the existence of the Hierarchy and Its interest in the world, and the possibility of coming into contact with It. And so, gradually, she drew round her a fairly large number of people, and tried to establish among them the conditions of coming into touch with the great Teachers of mankind. But she met there a great obstacle—the unwillingness of the normally intelligent and thoughtful man or woman of the western civilisation to realise what a teacher means in the occult sense of the term. She drew up a Pledge which Their would-be pupils were to take, and objections were everywhere raised to it, because it demanded from the pupil in Occultism, Obedience to the Teacher, and that was a barrier in the way of many.

Now it is perfectly true that unwise credulity will lead people into many a dangerous error. But the

very first test, as you may say, of one who desires to learn the great Occult Science is that that person shall have a conviction that it exists, and have the desire to learn it. But, after all, that is not so strange a thing, as in every form of Science where danger lurks in the experiments, with every Professor, say, of Chemistry, he would not take a pupil who would not obey him in his experiments. First-hand knowledge of Nature is one of the most dangerous of pursuits. We all know how the early investigators in Europe risked their lives in their experiments. We have all read about Roger Bacon; how he blew off a finger and blew out an eye, and stretched himself lifeless, apparently, on the floor of his cell by some explosions that he made in the course of his experiments. Inevitably there are dangers when you are trying to understand the great Laws of Nature. But that is not confined to what is technically known as Occult Science; it belongs to every Science that deals with these great Laws. And so, as a necessary safeguard for pupils and for teacher, any Professor of Chemistry will insist on obedience from those to whom he is to teach the combinations of the substances with which they deal. And no one grumbles at that; no one thinks it irrational. And yet, when someone who has learnt from great Teachers of the still hidden things, when such a person comes out into the world and seeks to spread to people ready to receive it something of the knowledge that has been given, at once there springs up as an obstacle between teacher and pupil, the demand that the pupil shall judge of the nature of the knowledge to be given and not trust his teacher until he has learnt enough to make his own experiments unguided, and understands the powers he is dealing with in his pursuit of knowledge of Laws as yet unknown to him. And there lay H. P. B.'s great obstacle, which foiled her to a very

large extent. She did not like to be called dictatorial or autocratic, or any other of the wonderful adjectives that people collect to throw at anybody who offers to tell them something, and teach them something under conditions, until they know the conditions and are able to walk alone. And so, finding that people objected to this promise of obedience, she changed it; said, quietly enough, "I have made it a farce." But apparently many of her pupils preferred the "farce" to the "reality," and consequently learnt very little, and many went away and said that they were disappointed in her teaching. Only a few accepted it; so things went very, very slowly.

Now you have to understand, with regard to what I will divide for the moment into Philosophy and Metaphysic, and Occult Science, that these things must be dealt with in different ways. Anyone who has the intellectual power to deal with philosophical questions can study Philosophy, and go as far as his power of thought will carry him; he does not have an artificial barrier to stop him, or there ought to be none, in such a subject. He may not go very far, but that will be because his intellect is not sufficiently developed. He may learn much that is valuable, but he will not be able to solve that mighty Problem of every Philosophy which, when solved, leads a man to the Knowledge of God. There, conditions are laid down. There, certain ways are pointed out that must be practised. And some of those may seem a little unreasonable to the pupil who does not realise that if he goes to a teacher, he should go because he thinks the teacher knows more than he does himself. After all, no one is obliged to study Occultism; no one need enter on that great Science, which leads man beyond the human into the super-human worlds.

The Light to-day has been offered; many have seen the Light and have determined to follow it,

accepting the conditions laid down and observing them. And very much may be learnt without those conditions. Growth in character; the Power of Thought; its creative power; along those lines there is an immense amount of knowledge to be found in Theosophical teachings, open to all the world; useful when mastered; helping anyone who has the patience, the perseverance and the steadfastness, into regions of knowledge not familiar to the world at large. But it is when you come to what is equivalent to the dangerous sciences here, that it is impossible to take responsibility of teaching, unless the pupil for the time is willing to follow the instructions of the teacher. For in this, it must be remembered that the only object of the secrecy is to protect the pupil and those around him; that it ceases, as far as he is concerned, when he has mastered a part of the Science, so far as his pursuit of that part is concerned. Only to facilitate his progress, only to protect him in safety, do the Masters of the Wisdom lay down rigid conditions for those who would penetrate into the, to them, unknown worlds.

And so H. P. B. left behind her some students whom she had started on the way, who had learnt far more of what she had to teach, and knew something of the methods of coming into direct touch with Members of the Hierarchy. And when that touch is established definitely, then the pupil may progress exactly in proportion to his strength, and the opening and growing powers of intuition, higher than reasoning, to discover for himself all that to which he has been led.

And the world to-day is at the stage where more and more prople have in them near the surface, as you may say, these possibilities of the higher development. For Nature, while she works slowly, works according to definite laws; and those who are told the laws and obey them will be able to grow according

to those laws and win an ever-expanding knowledge. But the thing no one can do is, to lay down the conditions under which that help shall be given. Everything is open to the scholar if he will take his life in his hands and penetrate—as Roger Bacon tried to do into the working of, to him, unknown physical laws—at his own risk into the darkness in front of him. But none may say to the Teachers: "These are the conditions that *I* will impose as a condition of becoming a pupil." For of all, They who are the great workers in the world, They who guide human evolution, who inspire the life of all great Religions, who guide the paths of Nations and aid the Race in its ever-climbing evolution, They have work enough on Their hands already, and the only reason why They should offer to take pupils is, if those pupils are ready to act as helpers in the Great Work, and to co-operate with their Leaders in the service of mankind.

You may remember how, very early in the life of the Society, one of the Masters wrote to Mr. Sinnett that They do not come out of their age-long seclusion simply to teach a few people in an occult club. To Them, the teaching of the Brotherhood of man, the acceptance of that teaching, the willing work to forward the life of Brotherhood, the readiness to sacrifice all for the sake of human evolution and the higher conditions of life, that is the greatest Object of the Society; and knowledge is only valuable as it makes one more effective in carrying that Message to the world. And so, as it was put to Mr. Sinnett, the really important thing for the Society is: To teach and to live Brotherhood.

But those who realise that they can do that better if they know and understand more; those who realise that the ladder of evolution can be climbed, so as to increase the ranks of Those who are the great Servants of mankind; they have the right to ask for the

knowledge if they will submit to the conditions under which it can be given; and they have found that "To those who Knock, the Door will be opened; that those who Seek, shall find."

And the Society to-day, as I shall try to put in my next talk with you, has the opportunity of entering again that Path that it forsook of seeking the Great Teachers, of wishing for Their guidance, of endeavouring to find out and to do Their will. For, as I have often said to you and to meetings of the Society and to the public everywhere, we are standing in one of those times of swifter evolution, which mark the Coming of the New Racial Type into the world; and therefore which mark the Coming of the great Teacher into the world once more to live as man among men, to teach the principles of a higher civilisation and to lay the strong foundations on which a happier and more brotherly society can be builded. At these rare times in the history of human evolution, conditions largely change and great opportunities are offered. The last time that they were offered, in the Coming of the Christ, His Message was rejected and only a few recognised Him, as it were, and believed in Him and followed Him. And the need for saying something more about what is called the Science of Occultism, the Laws of the Higher Life, is that, when He is again amongst us, more of you may take advantage of His presence; more of you may be ready to recognise Him; more of you may be willing to follow Him. For that reason, it is thought well by the great Teachers that statements should be made that may be unfamiliar, to prepare, if possible, a larger number of people to welcome Him, to accept His teachings when He shall come.

For He who comes, as many of you at least have read, is the World Teacher, Founder of the great Religions, the One who sends His Benediction on

every great Faith and pours into it His Life, His Wisdom and His Benediction. Those who would be able to welcome Him must cast aside narrowness of mind, prejudices which encrust human thought, and open themselves to teaching, ancient in its essence but new perchance in its presentment. Because of that Coming it is, that the Door is a little opened into the Occult World, that those who have the courage and the intuition may be able to win their way to that Ancient Narrow Path, where He will lead His disciples as of old; and, if possible, that the number may be larger than it was when last He came.

Among the mightiest of the Hierarchy is His place, Teacher and Guide, whom even the Masters call Their Rock of Ages. High above Them, They bow before Him; and yet He will deign once more to tread our mortal ways.

The Society with its message of the Divine Wisdom should at least be somewhat prepared for the realisation of these things, in which many are supposed to believe.

It is for that that these three talks of mine, restricted to Members of the Society, are given; to show to you, if I can, a little more of that Light, which is literally the Light of Life, the Light of the World. For remember that in every one of you there shines that Light, however hidden it may be; and it may be that in the words that render articulate to you the fact of that Ever-glowing Splendour, there may be some response at least, and that Light may spring up in the hearts of some, so that they shall believe, though they have not seen and felt the reality of the greatest Truths in life.

LECTURE II

FRIENDS :—

When I spoke to you on Monday last, I spoke of the earlier ideas, you will remember, of the Theosophical Society and of the Three Sections of which it consisted in the early days. Then I mentioned to you how, after the Coulomb trouble, a change took place in the policy of the Society: that it confined itself practically to the teaching of the Philosophic side of Theosophy, to propaganda connected with that side, teaching certain great Universal Truths and laying stress on that, but leaving aside what might be called the Esoteric or Occult part, on which H. P. B. had laid such great stress; so that, instead of being a Society bringing to the World the Message that she brought —the Message of the existence of a great Hierarchy of Super-men who could be reached, who were at the back of the great Movements in the world, guiding and shaping those Movements, whose existence had been recognised by a certain number of people who used particular methods in their investigations and in their search—leaving that part very much aside, it confined itself to the more Philosophic and Comparative Religion part of its work.

And I alluded to a statement, made to H. P. B. by her Master, with regard to that change of policy; but I had not with me at the last lecture a paper, which I have here in my hand, where what was said was verbally quoted. I brought it with me to-day, because

I wanted you to realise how great was the change that then occurred in the policy of the Movement. And H. P. B. put on record what was said, as to the change, by her own Master. "The Society," He said, "has liberated itself from Our grasp, Our influence, and We have let it go: We make no unwilling slaves." And then He stated: "Out of the Three Objects, the Second alone is attended to. It is no longer either a Brotherhood, or a body over the face of which broods the Spirit from beyond the Great Range."

There you have the clear definition of the change which showed itself in the second stage of the Society's life. With regard to the Brotherhood, that remained its First Object; but there was a very strong tendency at the time—a tendency which had been manifested in rather a crude form in the very early days—when a club had been formed at Simla, and requests were made through H. P. B. to her Teacher that the people who belonged to that Club should be specially instructed in regard to Occult phenomena. The answer to that was recorded by Mr. Sinnett in *The Occult World*: the Masters entirely declined to do anything of the kind, and said that those who found the teachings of Theosophy and its practice too uninteresting must go along their own lines; that They did not come out of Their life-long seclusion to teach a few well-to-do persons certain facts which might interest them. The great interest of the Masters was in the spread of Brotherhood; and especially, as was pointed out at the time, to bring together in India the ruling classes of the British, the educated in India, and the masses of the people; so that India might rise from the condition in which she then was, by the willing help of the white governing classes meeting Indians in social equality, and endeavouring to associate them in the government of their country.

That, for the time, failed. Mr. Hume, who had

made very gallant efforts in that direction, became so unpopular that he was practically obliged to resign; and then he started the idea of the Indian National Congress; and he did his best, I am sure, to bring about better relations between the white man and the coloured classes in India. That was one of what I may call the unpublished Objects of the Society, to draw the races together, to promote friendship between East and West. The work then was less difficult than it is now, the lack of success in that work having gradually aggravated the position, so far as the Indians were concerned; but it brought about, to a certain extent, the recognition of their rights in their own country.

The Society, of course, did not interfere directly with any political questions; it was rather the time to spread the spirit of Brotherhood. The white people were asked to stretch out their hands to the coloured races, and bring them into better and more friendly relationship. But the effort failing, the Master used the phrase: "It is no longer a Brotherhood." Those who had joined it were not trying to work for Brotherhood; while others rejected the Occult side of the teachings and so reduced it, as He said, "to a soulless corpse."

Well, as I mentioned to you in my previous lecture, that condition brought about what you know as the E.S., and H. P. B. said it was intended to do what the Society as a whole had failed to do. From that time onwards—from 1888, when H. P. B. formed that Section—the Theosophical Society began to gain a larger amount of hearing in the world, because more life was poured into it, although the Masters did not take up their old position in it, nor constitute again the First Section thereof—or rather, as it was then called, the Third Section.

From that time onwards the Society has grown and

prospered more and more rapidly. H. P. B.'s own phrase with regard to the Esoteric Section—which was authorised by Colonel Olcott in 1888—was that: "It was the Heart of the Theosophical Society"; it really playing, in the great body of the Exoteric Society, the functions of the heart in the human body, driving the blood, the symbol of the life, through the whole of the Society. And there has been, since then, a fact continually repeated: that as one Religion after another contributed members of its Faith to the Theosophical Society and to the Esoteric Section, that Religion became itself more vivified, and more and more of the life of the Spirit poured into such a Religion. In fact, one of the marked features of the progress of the Society, since the Esoteric Section was formed, has been this vitalising of the Religions of the world; noticed most prominently, first of all, in India, where the ancient Religions of the East were languishing under the impact of the Western civilisation and education; always remembering—for it is only fair to state that fact—that what is called English Education in India has lost that side of its work which has been so prominent in Great Britain itself: all religious teaching was entirely shut out with regard to the English education, so-called. In that way the name was not fair, because, in all your great Public Schools, in your Colleges, and in your Universities, there is a distinct teaching of Religion; and that—although quite rightly a "Conscience Clause" has been introduced in the religious system of the country, leaving out the great Public Schools which do not come exactly within that system—although the "Conscience Clause" was introduced, still the fact of religious teaching in the schools has remained to a very great extent, and only children definitely withdrawn from it lose the help that otherwise they might have had. But in India the case was different. It was practically impossible for the English Government, as

a Christian Government, to give an education in the Religions of the country. You have there all the great Religions. You have the oldest, the Hindu; and the next oldest, that we now call the Parsî (belonging originally of course to Persia), only a small community in India, but still with great Scriptures, however fragmentary; and, as Colonel Olcott was always trying to persuade the Parsîs, it was their duty to carry on researches in the country of its birth, and to try to make good by archæological investigation—by excavations, as in other parts of the world, digging up the fragments of that past Religion—and so fill up some of the gaps, very many, that exist in their Scriptures of to-day.[1] He was not, however, so successful in that as he had been in the revival of Buddhism in the island of Ceylon, where, as you know, the general Religion is Buddhist, and where he almost worked a miracle in relation to Education. He found in that Island all the children were being educated in schools that did not teach them their ancestral Faith; but he so excited the enthusiasm of the Buddhist population by his lectures, his energy and his example, that a great movement took place there for rescuing the children of Buddhists from being perverted from their own Faith. Village after village built a village school. They begged from the richer people in the village gifts of cocoa-nut palms, which provide so many building materials there. They raised sheds which served as schools, and they began to add to the ordinary education the teaching of the children of Buddhists in their own Faith. And so splendid was the success made there by Colonel Olcott, as President of the Theosophical Society, that the whole atmosphere of that Island was changed. Buddhists began to be proud of their Faith instead of being rather ashamed of it. And, as I read one day,

[1] See *The Spirit of Zoroastrianism*, by H. S. Olcott. Adyar Pamphlet No. 23.

in a great complaint made by the Missionaries, a few years before when a man came into the witness-box of a Court to give evidence and was asked to what Religion he belonged, if he were a Buddhist he would hang down his head and half whisper; but now they came into Court with their heads up, and when asked, "What is your Religion?" the answer given was: "I am a Buddhist," with considerable pride in the statement.

Colonel Olcott, as most of you know, perhaps, was a Buddhist—that is, he took the Five Precepts, the Five Promises, made by a Buddhist, which is the Gateway of entry into their Faith. And he became among them one of the most beloved of leaders and a great worker; and these Buddhist schools appeared all over the Island. There are now there, not only the elementary schools in very large numbers, but a great girl's school and a girl's college, and a college for teachers, and they are among the most successful of educational institutions in Ceylon. Mrs. Musæus Higgins, whose name you may have heard, has been the life and soul of that work, so that now literally thousands of Buddhist girls, who are now mothers of families, owe to her energy, as at first directed by Colonel Olcott, the bringing up of their children as Buddhists. That has practically revolutionised the Education of the Island.

Now that, in the East, has been a very marked feature of the work of the Society; its educational work with respect to the great Religions.

In India itself Buddhists are comparatively few, and my own work, when I went over there in 1893, was specially to take up the revival of the Hindu Faith. For, as Colonel Olcott said, he had been able to revive Buddhism, not only in Ceylon but also in Burma, and that part of the work was practically done. He had also done what he could for the Parsîs, although they had not responded to his energetic appeals to search

into the past of their great Religion. And he was glad when, in going there, I was able to take up the other side, the revival of Hinduism. That has been one of my great crimes, I believe, in the eyes of very many of the governing class there ; for, as Sir Valentine Chirol wrote : To have a European woman going about and telling the Hindus that they should study their own Religion instead of the Religion of the white races, was one of the great reasons for the revival of Hinduism, which, at the same time, had revived the spirit of Nationality in India. That, of course, is true. Where you have a great Religion spread over a huge country, where the great majority of the people of the country repeat certain identical prayers, morning and evening, where their worship shows out the same great characteristics, inevitably, then, the sense of unity appears. That had disappeared to some extent under the great spread of materialism in India. There was never a time when there was any likelihood of the Christian Faith being accepted, either by the educated Indians or by the masses of the people ; but the result on the educated classes was a tremendous spirit of scientific materialism, that spread in every direction. The absence of religious teaching strengthened it ; and yet, as already said, it would not be fair to blame the Government for that great lack in the teaching, because for a Christian Government to meddle with the teaching of the Religion of the country would inevitably have caused widespread discontent, if not rebellion. So, as I have always said, both there and in England, you cannot blame the English Government for that particular action. They were obliged to be neutral in religious matters, at the risk, if they showed any partiality, of stirring up widespread discontent and anger.

My particular work there for a long time was to undermine the materialistic belief, which had spread

through the educated classes of Indians. And that, of course, it was comparatively easy to do by the spirit of Theosophical teachings. For, after all, Hinduism was the Mother Religion of the great Indo-Aryan Race ; and although you should always remember that every Religion in its turn has its own particular work to do in the world, that every one of them is founded by the World Teacher of the time ; that that World Teacher appeared again and again in the old days with each sub-race, and His teaching spread westwards, first to Egypt and the borders of the Mediterranean, then to Persia, then to Greece and Rome and Southern Europe, then to the Teutonic sub-race through the middle and the northern parts ; every one of these had its own spiritual lesson, its own particular characteristic, its own ceremonies giving by symbol the same great basic truths ; and in that way each great civilisation was founded, was moulded, was coloured. Thus we have behind us, in the history of that great Race, those basic truths presented in different forms, a different form for every sub-race. And to the Teutonic sub-race, the sub-race Religion taught by the Christ—the Lord Buddha, who had been the World Teacher before Him, having given the other four Religions to the previous sub-races—to that fifth sub-race, as we have learnt to call it, the Teutonic sub-race, the Christ came, the Bodhisattva, as the World Teacher, giving that special Religion which characterises not only the sub-race, but also spread southwards, where the Religion of Greece, the Religion of Beauty, had dominated the fourth sub-race, the Keltic. (The word Kelt, I understand, has gone out of fashion in these days in modern ethnology, but we have always called it the Keltic sub-race.) And the sub-race that loves art, and beauty, and grace of form, and language, in such a predominant way, it also, in the Nations springing from it, naturally took up the

Religion of the Christ, with the great characteristics of that Religion, the strengthening of the individuality, essential for the further progress of humanity, and then the teaching to the strong that their special greatness lay, not in oppression, but in Service.

Glancing, then, over that, you will realise that the revival of the great Eastern Religions in their own lands naturally became a very prominent feature of the Theosophical Society in the East. Also over here, as you know, there has been a strong effort made to show the Esoteric side of Christianity; to show that in Christianity, as in every great Faith, there is a certain system of basic truths, taught for the helping of the people at large; and then a deeper, a more abstruse, a fuller knowledge, veiled to a large extent in every Faith, because of the requirements made of those who would study it, requirements demanded for the safety of the student, as well as for the safety of the world at large.

Now, as you all know, in Christendom there has been an immense revival of what is here called Mysticism, which is really part of the Occult side of Religion. Scattered Mystics there have always been; but the revival of Mysticism in our own time has widened out and strengthened the Christian Religion enormously in its power of appeal to the more thoughtful and the more intuitive of the people.

Many years have passed now since Dean Inge gave some remarkable lectures on Mysticism; and one statement of *The Times* with regard to those lectures amused me enormously, for *The Times* (which is generally, very largely recently, the "Past Times" rather than the "Coming Times") made a most admirable remark that "We"—the editorial "We"—"We thought Mysticism was an exploded superstition, and now we have a Dean of the Church declaring that it is the only rational form of Religion." Well, that

was naturally startling, but none the less, Mystic ideas have spread and spread through Christendom ; and the effect of that has been a very greatly increased revival of interest among the highly educated in Christian teachings. And the more that has been looked into, the more have people been able to see, both in the Gospels, and especially in the Epistles, phrases that are incomprehensible, suggestions that cannot be carried out, ideas which are partially understood, but evidently a great deal escapes the comprehension ; so that they are moved to study the more hidden side of Christianity.

Now, one of the sets of books that I am very thankful I studied when I was a young girl—and that is a long time ago—was what was then called " The Library of the Fathers." And I read that Library with great interest, S. Clement of Alexandria, for instance, and a number of other succeeding volumes which gave the teachings of the Fathers of the Christian Church. One of the greatest of those writers is not quite regarded as one of the Fathers—Origen, the great Gnostic of the early Church ; but he also I read with great care ; and so I got that stock of theological and primitive knowledge which has been enormously helpful to me in the study of Theosophical teachings. For you may remember a phrase used by Origen, with regard to what he called the Mysteries of Jesus ; and he quoted the statement that was made when students were invited to present themselves for admission to those Mysteries (I am quoting now from memory, but the gist of it is accurate, if not verbally exact) : " Let those who for a long time have been conscious of no transgression and are obedient to the teaching of the Word, let them come forth and learn the teachings which Jesus gave in secret to His own disciples."

Now, with regard to those Mysteries of Jesus, there are many most interesting references in the different

writings which we have in what is often called the Patristic Age, those who followed the Apostles and the Disciples of the Christ; these took up the Tradition, which was told to one after another, when they reached the stage where such teaching became practicable and useful.

You may remember how S. Paul speaks of teaching "Wisdom among them that are perfect" (1 Cor. ii. 6), and you find in the Pauline Epistles a number of references to teaching that is not given in the early stages of Christian growth. Then he said there was to be the "milk" for babes, but for the elders "strong meat" (Heb. v. 12–14).

If you will read carefully passages, especially in the Epistles of Timothy, and in cases where S. Paul is dealing with the priesthood and the episcopate of the early Church, you will see how he lays down rules for their guidance and for their transmission of the Wisdom given them at the Laying on of hands; now that was really the backbone of primitive Christianity. S. Clement speaks of those who were "touched by the Thyrsus" —that being a certain rod, familiar in the Mysteries of the past, with a cone-shaped extension either at one end or at both, as the case might be, modelled really on what we know among Theosophists as the "Rod of Power," which exists and is kept at Shamballa, the great centre of the Spiritual Life of the World. You will find just an outline of the shape of that in Bishop Leadbeater's new book, *The Masters and the Path*, together with a mass of information not hitherto given to the public at all, but taught in the Esoteric Section very largely in the different groups; now, in order to prepare the world for the Coming of the Christ, it is given out for the first time publicly, so that every one may read it. And so S. Clement speaks of those who had been touched by this, referring to the fact that there were some who might profit by

part of the teaching of the Mysteries who had not reached what was necessary for some of the deeper teachings; the power to leave the physical body at will in the subtle body (the consciousness passing away from the brain and the nervous system, withdrawn into a subtler body), and able to function consciously in this subtler body. At one stage of the decline of the Ancient Mysteries comparatively few people were willing to go through the training which made such a voluntary separation of the dense body and the subtle body possible, so they were thrown into a trance by this Thyrsus; and in that condition of trance the subtle body was separated, and then could pass through the ceremonies of the Mysteries; and there were many stages in this decline—the gradual lessening of the number of students and of their willingness to undergo rigid training, and the corresponding alteration of the form in which those Mysteries were presented to those who were admitted at all. And remember that in ancient days there was no secret about the existence of the Mysteries. You may read about them in the old Greek writers. Plato tells us how he had passed through the Mysteries in Egypt, and so on. Great processions were held in Greece, in Egypt, and in other countries. Each country had its own Mysteries. And so along that line, as you trace them historically in literature, you find these gradually descend, so to speak, into more and more symbolic forms, until at last you come to that system of symbols and allegories which is now known as Freemasonry, which is but a slight outline of the Mysteries which still exist, have always existed, and will exist until the end of the ages during which the world will last.

From those who are the Guardians of those Mysteries have come the secret teachings that you find in the great Mystical writings. Many of you will be aware that there are a certain number of manuscripts called

Rosaries, which have come down through the centuries, and of which manuscripts still exist in some of the great European libraries. They are not readily shown, but can be shown if people really manifest enough knowledge and interest to make it possible for them to appreciate those manuscripts. And some have been deciphered in what are called Palimpsests, for the monks, who had possession of these manuscripts, probably could not read them, and so, by means of some preparation, had covered over the old writing and had then written on the prepared surface some other matter, somewhat inferior. Some of these have been recovered, by the stuff that had been put over the parchments being removed; and some very remarkable books have been discovered in that way. The old Rosary was named from the fact that the Rose in Egypt was the symbol of secrecy; and in times of persecution, when people wanted to convey information, they would use the word "Rosary" for what they wrote; later on, they took refuge, as you know, in alchemical symbols; those books in the Middle Ages which have come down to us from men of knowledge, concealed not in cipher, but in language alchemical or astrological, which has one meaning on the surface and another meaning to those who had been instructed.

Now, on the whole of that mystical side of Christianity, there has been very much light thrown by Theosophical teachings; because the teachings that are called "Theosophy"—which we sometimes call "Theosophical in a secondary sense," the primary sense being the Direct Knowledge of God—are teachings which you find in every great Faith, in all the great Scriptures; sometimes veiled in the form of the words used, but still discoverable; those which we often call "the great basic teachings of Religion."

I am just reminding you, in passing—for I have no

time now for dealing with it—that a science was developed side by side with the archæological researches into ancient and buried cities—that a science arose in that connection called Comparative Mythology. The people who gave it that name did not remember that the Myths of ancient peoples were often considerably truer than the more fragmentary histories that came down from antiquity, and as they did not believe these nor understand them, they liked the words Comparative Mythology rather than a better term, Comparative Religion. If, however, you have studied the many, many books that have been published along that line of study and thought, you will be aware that there are certain great truths found in every great Religion. Sometimes they are veiled for a time, and amongst the most interesting of those basic truths veiled for a time in Christianity was the teaching of Reincarnation. It existed, as you will find if you care to take the trouble to search, in the early Church. It was a common belief of the Hebrews, as you will find, for instance, in the question addressed by the disciples to the Christ about a certain man who had been born blind: "Master, who did sin, this man or his parents that he was born blind?" (S. John ix. 2). Or, you may find it in Josephus, in his *History of the Jews*; it was a common belief of the Jews at the time of the Christ. It was universal, as you are aware, in all the Religions that preceded Christianity. It is found in primitive Christianity, in the Writings of the Fathers, to which I alluded; and that is one point on which they have been of help to me in dealing with Theosophy; the special teaching of Origen on the subject of Reincarnation is the only one that has ever been condemned by the Church. The teaching of Origen on Reincarnation was condemned by the Roman Catholic Church, but specifically as taught by him. Apparently, consciously or unconsciously, the Roman

Catholic Church had been guided so as not to deny the doctrine itself, but only the form in which it was given by one who, being regarded as tainted by what is called the " Heresy of Gnosticism," was not regarded as a safe teacher in the later centuries of the Church.

Now, that doctrine for a time, then, was submerged and fell out of sight, except among the heretics. You find it in the doctrines of the Albigenses, for instance, and by many heretical sects that were persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church. It never quite disappeared from Christendom, and it reappeared strongly in some of the later Christian poets like Wordsworth, who, as you know, spoke of it as :

> Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting ;
> The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
> Hath had elsewhere its setting,
> And cometh from afar.
>
> [*Ode V.*

In the philosophers also of Germany you find it very strongly taught (*vide The Idea of Rebirth,* by Francesca Arundale), and now it has become largely spread among Christian people, partly because certain philosophical writers have pointed out that it is a necessity, that it gives us a rational explanation of the progress of mankind. You may ask, Why was it allowed to drop out ? But if you think over that question, and if you think over one effect of the doctrine of Reincarnation on the people who take it for granted, all the Eastern Nations of the older Religions, you will see, I think very clearly, why it was necessary that for a time that enormously important doctrine—as illuminating Divine Justice and the varied conditions of intellect and moral character brought by the child into the world—you will realise why that one important object of Christianity (the development of the individual) would for a time have been clouded

For it is perfectly true that where Reincarnation is taken for granted—as it is in all the great Faiths of the East—the value to the individual of a single life very much diminishes. You will find sometimes, among those who take this for granted, such an idea as, " Well, if I cannot do it in this life, I shall be able to do it in another." You will find that it tends, among very many of them, to a kind of sluggishness, of inactivity. Sometimes, of course, it acts as a great stimulus, and I will give you an example. As my Indian servant said to me when the Colonel passed away, and was lying on his bier covered with flowers in the large hall at Adyar, when hundreds of people came in to place flowers on the dense body before it was cremated, he saw all these people coming in, and he said to me in his own language, " I, a little man ; but if I live a good life, then I become a big man like the Colonel ! " Now it has that effect of stimulation to some, but to a very large number it rather tends to sluggishness, to inactivity ; and in a Faith that was specially wanted for the development of the individual and the concrete scientific mind in man, the challenging mind, the mind that aspires after strength and power of thought, it was well for such a training of the Race that the doctrine of Reincarnation should for a time become obscured. The teaching of Christianity along one line, for example, " What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul ? " would have no meaning for those who believe in Reincarnation. And the doctrine that grew up and that has so dimmed the idea of the Love of God, the doctrines taught in that terrible book written by a Christian Archbishop with the title of *The Wrath of God to Man*, the whole of that made people attach an enormous importance to the present life. To make the everlasting destiny of the human soul depend on a short human life, or even a long one, certainly would intensify the wish to excel

in strength, to excel in knowledge, to an over-valuing of the individuality. And so you only find a few here and there believing in Reincarnation; and one of the quaintest instances I have come across was in a pamphlet written by the chaplain of a monarch of not very admirable memory, Charles the Second. His chaplain wrote a sermon on Reincarnation, and points out with very great cogency of reasoning that it is necessary to believe in Reincarnation in order to justify the Justice of God. And it is quite a good little pamphlet. Where he got his particular views from, and whether he preached them as Court Chaplain, I do not know; but I had the pamphlet and found it a useful little publication. There are not many chaplains, however, of that kind. Generally, the doctrine of Reincarnation dropped out. Indeed, it has done its work—its absence, rather, has done its work—and people, using the concrete mind, challenge the Divine Justice, and demand an answer. For it is very hard to justify, if there be only one life—the life of some child born, perhaps, of a drunkard and a harlot in some slum in a great city, brought up among foulness of language, curses and blows, taught to steal as a duty and punished if he did not bring home some coppers, stolen or earned, to be spent in drink, living in defiance of the law, turned by the laws into a habitual criminal until he spends, perhaps, twenty, or even more, years of his life in gaol, and becomes a hopeless criminal, perhaps finishes on the gallows; when you ask: "What has that man got out of human life? What does he know of its splendour and of its beauty, of its poetry and its art, of its refinement and its delicacy of thought, what of all the lessons that life has to teach that Child of God? What has such a man learnt in the stages of his miserable life?" And when you put side by side with him some child born as a genius, or as a saint, gentle in all his ways, generous in his thoughts,

ready to share what he has with every one, or sharing freely intellectual power, so that his path is strewn with roses, praised everywhere for the qualities that he has done nothing to deserve—if Reincarnation be not true, then surely you begin to realise, if you think at all, that no God of Love who was able to give such a soul to the child born a genius could have given the stunted, miserable soul that was brought into the human body of a child such as I have described.

Reincarnation comes back necessarily in our own days; and, practically, that is the only one of the basic truths which has for a period disappeared from the popular teaching of the Christian Faith. With regard to Islâm, you find it among the thinkers of Islâm, but very little among the populace. You may read in a middle age how a great Islâmic Teacher said:—

I died from the mineral, and became a plant;
I died from the plant, and reappeared in an animal;
I died from the animal, and became a man.
Wherefore then should I fear?
When did I grow less by dying?
Next time I shall die from the man
That I may grow the wings of the angel.
From the angel too must I advance: all things shall
Perish, save His Face!
—*The Mesnavî*, IV, Jalal-ud-Dîn Rumi.

—which is the same great teaching that you find in the older Faiths.

Thus during that period of the Society—that which I have been dealing with—its great work was Propaganda, public Education. Not only in the ordinary Education, but in bringing back to India the general Education hand in hand with the knowledge necessary for the training of the various functions of the State. And that educational period has done magnificent work, has revivified Religion by putting it to the

younger generation; so that everywhere now in the East the Religions are strong and powerful, with the mighty ancestry that lies behind them, and full of pressing-forward energy towards the greater knowledge that lies in front. And although it be true, as a great Teacher said, that it was no longer brooded over by the great Spirit from beyond the Himâlayan Range, yet it is also true that, by those who joined its Esoteric Section, the inner knowledge has gradually been revived, until again that great place of the Masters in it became once more a part of the Theosophical Society, and so has brought it onward to the stage with which I hope to deal in the Third Lecture of this course—its great duty to the world to proclaim the necessity of a World Religion, into which men of every Faith can enter without leaving the Faith of their fathers; in which all men—Buddhists, Hindus, Parsîs, Christians—will be able to join in the great acts of worship to the One GOD and FATHER of all. And so will bring it into reality—that magnificent destiny spoken of by one of the great Teachers Themselves, when He said: "The Theosophical Society was chosen as the corner-stone, the foundation, of the future Religions of humanity."

LECTURE III

FRIENDS :—

In to-night's talk I want, if I can, to sketch the third stage in the Society's life, which has brought us up to the present position, and has led to that Statement, with regard to the duty of the Theosophical Society, which is travelling all round the world to the various National Societies, addressed to the General Secretaries, asking their views as to whether or not a certain Statement should be made as to the reason for the existence of the Theosophical Society.

Now, I have mentioned to you already the salient facts during the life of the Society which changed its character, you may remember, after the Coulomb conspiracy against H. P. B., which led in 1888 to the formation of what is known as the Esoteric Section; and so took up again that work which had been dropped by the whole Society, and was stated by H. P. B. to be intended to do that which the Society had failed to do. But I did not mention to you that in 1907—the fact was also stated lately in a letter by my brother, Mr. Jinarājadāsa (Vice-President of the Theosophical Society)—the Highest Section of the Society was reconstituted, and some of the Masters again began to take the place in the Society that They had originally held.

The Esoteric Section—while H. P. B., in the *Key to Theosophy*, spoke of its creation, and while she printed in her own magazine *Lucifer* in the October number of 1888, the fact of its creation [1]—has been a society

[1] See Appendix.

of students taught under very special conditions; while the Society as a whole is absolutely free in matters of opinion, those who desire to enter the Esoteric Section, or School, as it is generally called now, are members of the Society who by their study have come to a definite conclusion as to certain great basic truths of Religion. Also, they have reached belief in the Masters; and the general idea of that Section is that, having come to certain definite beliefs, having certain clear convictions as to the relationship of human beings to Those who have fulfilled man's destiny and become perfect, so far as the human stage is concerned, they can safely enter upon a course of study if they desire to develop in themselves certain great virtues necessary as preparation for treading The Path, and are ready to undergo the discipline in Meditation and otherwise which would fit them to develop the qualities which, in the average human being at the present stage of evolution, are latent and not developed. Some of these will be developed, and are now developing, in what we call the sixth Sub-race, that is, the sixth sub-division of the great Race to which you all belong. That has appeared fairly largely now, in certain parts of the world, and the children are showing qualities which were foretold as their special characteristics.

Now, in the Esoteric Section, there is one clear rule that I will mention, because it bears strongly on conduct. Those who come into it believe, as I said, in the existence of the Masters. They recognise an Inner Head of the School, Who is a Master. Doing that, it necessarily follows that if a distinct command is given by a Member of the Hierarchy, they are bound to obey it or to leave the School. Now a command from a Member of the Hierarchy is one of the very rarest things in the world. Very seldom is any order given, except to those who are distinctly Disciples of a Master and understand

the conditions of progress in the Occult life. A large part of the training is the self-training, the self-discipline, without which no great progress can be made, if any, in the Spiritual Life.

Looking at it, then, from that standpoint for the moment, you would realise, I think, that, short of any command, any indication of the wishes or the will of the Hierarchy would naturally be regarded by those who believe in it, with eager desire to carry it out. And that, of course, is true of really earnest people who believe in the existence of the Hierarchy, and believe also that it can, and does, communicate with human beings, as well as guide generally the evolution of the World. Hence, when once more They came into direct touch with a body of students, organised under Their Messenger, H. P. B., for that purpose, naturally there was a very considerable growth that became apparent rapidly in the line of general conduct taken up in connection with the Society as a whole. One of the signs of that, after the date (1907) at which this highest Section was reconstituted, was the movement to spread active Brotherhood for the helping and uplifting of the more suffering sections of humanity; and what is known as the Theosophical Order of Service was established, carrying out a hint which was dropped in a letter from one of the Great Ones, published originally in H. P. B.'s own *Lucifer*, and republished by myself, in order to indicate why this Order of Service was established, in *The Theosophist*, which had passed under my control as President.

That Order for a long time, while doing valuable work, worked on a small scale. Its motto was one which has always seemed to me a very beautiful one: "An organisation of all who love for the service of all who suffer." And that has really been the spirit that has inspired the Order. Under its present Secretary, Mr. Arthur Burgess, who is well known to many of

you, it has reached very large dimensions, has spread from one country to another, has taken up departments of work one after another; a department for the helping of the Blind, for instance, in the teaching of Theosophy, where Theosophical books are translated in Braille for the reading of the Blind, and are supplied very largely now to various institutions. Then, again, other lines of work have been various lines of fruitful, social reform; kindness to animals and the spreading of a better relation between the human and the sub-human kingdoms; help has also been organised to meet special needs, and of late years, as you may know—since the war began and the results of that war caused widespread suffering—it became very eager to work, and has worked most efficiently, in the helping of those who suffered most from the results of the war, sending out monetary and other help, especially to Russia, in the frightful sufferings that followed the excesses of the revolutionary movement, and also took a very active part in the helping of the children of the enemy countries, as they were called, who were such terrible sufferers, especially in Germany and Austria and Hungary, from the shortage of food, with the results of that on young children, in the prevalence of various diseases, threatening the manhood and womanhood into which they would grow. Along those lines generally the work has been done.

One curious letter I had, because some of the members had founded a branch to oppose Vivisection; I had a letter from a member of the Society, asking whether, as the Society was neutral and included people of every opinion, I would sanction a branch of the Order of Service for the promotion of Vivisection. I answered that if the letter-writer would show that it was consistent with Brotherhood, I would at once authorise it, as it would then come under the First Object of the Society. I never had an answer to that letter, and I

suppose it was rather difficult to prove that the torture of animals was an exemplification of the Brotherhood of Humanity ; anyhow, that was the end of it.

Now that work, as I said, increased to a marvellous extent, and is spreading over the greater part of the world ; and that was one of the exemplifications that members of the Society were ready to spread practical Brotherhood wherever they could.

Then there came the Educational Movement, at first very strongly in India ; and then appearing also over here in England and Scotland. Now a special peculiarity of the Educational Movement, as a branch of the Society's work in Brotherhood and in the spread of friendship of Religions, lay in the fact that—and I take it in its strongest form in India—every child coming into a Theosophical School, and older ones in the Colleges, should be taught its own Religion.

I mentioned to you in regard to the Educational Movement, the other day, that in India the Government had been unable to teach Religion in the Schools, because the Government was Christian and the Schools were filled with children of Hindus, Buddhists, Musalmâns, Parsîs, and so on, and only a very small minority of Christians ; and I said then it was not the blame of the educational system transplanted, because under the conditions the Government could do nothing else ; but a result of the education there carried on by the Government and entirely free from religious teaching was the great spread of materialism among the highly educated classes. They became proficient in the teachings of the western philosophers, followed such great teachers as Huxley, as Spencer, and entirely neglected the great philosophical and scientific systems of India ; and so the religious feeling gradually grew more dead. I mentioned that especially in connection with Buddhism, if you remember. Now, in all the Schools in which the Society—or rather the members

of the Society—have been concerned, Religion has been one of the subjects taught. Children of each Faith were taught, wherever possible, by a teacher of their own Faith ; so that they grew up in the Schools, and went on into the Colleges, with a backbone of religious thought, which largely raised and purified their character.

Then, in the opening of every day at School, from the time that this was started in 1898 down to the present day, a very short service is held for the whole of the School ; and there a prayer from each great Religion represented in the School is recited by one of its members, all pupils standing reverently and listening reverently to the prayer. The Religions are taken in the order of their date. The Hindu Religion, a Hindu boy chants in Samskrit one of the great Hindu prayers. He is followed by a Zoroastrian, who chants in Zend from one of the Parsî prayers. He again is followed by a Buddhist, who recites the Panchasila in Pâli. Then comes the Christian, when generally the Lord's Prayer is the prayer recited. And lastly the great Religion of Islâm, one of the Musalmân pupils chanting in Arabic a characteristic prayer of his Faith.

Now that has had a wonderful effect on the feeling of those who are educated under that system. They learn to reverence all Religions and not only their own. And learning together and playing together, while taught also their own Faith, you have friendship growing up between the boys and the girls of the different Faiths which lasts on into their manhood or womanhood ; and I cannot give you a better proof of the width of mind which has been the result of such teaching than by giving you one instance. A great Hindu Judge of the High Court of Madras established a yearly prize in the Central Hindu Collegiate School, to be given to the boy who, by the votes of his fellow-students, was the most helpful boy in the school. Now

although in the Central Hindu College and School the enormous majority were Hindus, a year or two after that prize was established it was a Musalmân boy, a Muhammadan boy, who was voted by his Hindu fellow-students to be the most helpful boy in the School—showing you the widening effect that came from this sympathetic attitude of the Religions to each other; and wherever now in India we come across, as we constantly do, boys educated under that system, we find that they are good citizens, wide and tolerant in their religious Faith, ready to work with people of any Faith, and always also workers for social and political reform; and that now has been going on for a number of years, since 1898—sufficiently long for those who were little boys when they came into our Schools to be men out in the world and proving the character of their training. And another result was, that as we did not favour, and in fact forbade, punishments in our Schools, the religious impulse took the place of all forms of coercion; and so our boys and girls are always bright, happy and ready to help anywhere, showing out a type of character that among the Inspectors of the Schools in North and South is recognised as the character of those who are brought up under the influence of such religious and moral teaching.

Passing on from that—for it is one of the great characteristics of the influence of Theosophists in the educational field—leaving that—because, although much might be said on it, I have not time to deal with it longer—we come to a period in the history of the Society which, in this case, takes its impulse largely from the attitude of those members who are students in the Esoteric School, when a recommendation was made for certain distinct lines of work which it would be well should be favoured and strengthened by those who accepted Theosophical teachings. This, I may

say in passing, was not made public at all, but was only a suggestion made to the School of which a Master was the Head; not a command, but a suggestion. And the suggestion came from the One whom we know as the World Teacher, the Lord Maitreya, the Bodhisattva, the Christ, whatever name you give Him, and it was, that these three lines of activity should be specially worked for and helped, where it was possible so to do.

One of these was the Educational Movement, of which already great approval had been shown. Then came, in 1916, the establishment of that which you know as the Liberal Catholic Church; and then, at the same time, following on the general Education and this special form of Christianity, there came the approval of what you publicly know, most of you, as the Co-Masonic Movement.

Those three lines of activity were then, as it were, placed by the World Teacher as especially important for all of those who are preparing for His Coming and who sympathised with any of them; there is never, in these matters, compulsion put on anyone. So far as the Educational Movement is concerned, I have said all I have time to say now. Let me pause for a moment on the Liberal Catholic Church, because naturally, I think, among a large number of the general public—more perhaps in the Dominions than here in England, but fairly strong also in England, though lessening in strength, and quite strong in Scotland—there was a great opposition to the name "Catholic." Naturally, from English history, that might readily arise, and the word "Catholic" had always been used, more or less, in common parlance for the Roman Catholic Church. People had forgotten that there were other Churches, Christian Churches, that also claimed to be "Catholic." The Orthodox Greek Church, as it is called, claims naturally the name of "Catholic." So you also find it

constantly used in the great Syrian Church. I do not know how far, or how much, you are acquainted with that Church here, but we know a good deal of it in India, because the Syrian Church was the one that in the sixth century of the Christian Era sent out a number of missionaries to the West of India. I will not enter into the controversial question whether Christianity was really carried to India by S. Thomas the Apostle. There are places, one near Madras, for instance, called San Thomé, which is only a form of the name S. Thomas; and he is supposed to have been martyred near Madras. That is contested very much, but in the sixth century it is certain that the Syrian Church was established on the southern part of the western coast of India; if you happen to know the geography there, in Travancore and Cochin. That has existed in India ever since, making Christianity practically indigenous now in that part of India; it had been spread widely elsewhere, and it is now an indigenous Religion, so to speak; just as Islâm later on became an indigenous Religion there; so that in thinking of Christianity in India, you must not confine your thought of it to the modern missionary efforts. The Syrian Church did not, to any extent, attack the Religions of the country. It was quiet, earnest and a very devoted Church, and the numbers not very large.

Now this name "Catholic," as you know, only means "Universal," so it is rather foolish, a proof rather of ignorance and prejudice, I think, to object to Christianity being Universal. Of course, no one really does, only words have such a hypnotising effect that, if you speak of the Liberal Catholic Church, you at once make some people think that you are talking of a kind of a "square-triangle," and that the two words are contradictory and are opposed, and that a person cannot be a Catholic and at the same time be Liberal.

Then, again, a great part of the Occult teaching of Christianity had fallen out from the English-speaking peoples at the time of the Reformation. You know the struggle that followed the originating of the Reformation here; that rather disreputable King who set himself up as the head of the Church, Henry the Eighth: and then there were the persecutions under Queen Mary, and the equally cruel persecutions under Elizabeth. In fact, I have never understood, looking at the two, why Queen Mary, for burning Protestants, was called "Bloody" Queen Mary, while Queen Elizabeth, who pressed large numbers of Roman Catholic people to death under heaps of stones, was spoken of as "Glorious" Queen Elizabeth! But that prejudice has gone on, and very large numbers of English people, as you know, take the name of "Protestant," rather forgetting that a negative name is perhaps not the best name by which to describe so great a Religion as Christianity. That antagonism, however, has lasted down to the present day, and in Scotland, of course, it is very much stronger; so that you find, when the Liberal Catholic Church was started and used the old Ritual of the Church, with all its Occult significance and usages, that people first thought it was Roman Catholicism, and therefore objected to it; and they objected to it because it was one which definitely put forward the explanation of the Occult parts of all Christian Liturgies. Others objected to it because it cut out of its Liturgy the very melancholy side that you find in some of the Christian Liturgies; the attitude towards sin, for instance, where a person calls himself a "miserable sinner." I have heard it said, and I sympathise with it, that you may be a sinner, but why be a "miserable" sinner? And there is a great deal of that melancholy, gloomy idea of the relation of man to God, which has caused a very considerable failure of effort in the real conquest of sin

in the individual character. Fear is the most paralysing thing you can have, and the most active creative force in us is thought. Of Man, you may know, it is said by a great Eastern Scripture, "Man is created by thought." And that is literally true. And that Scripture goes on to say, "As a man thinks, so he becomes." That does not mean that mere drifting, casual thoughts, which may be your own or come to you from somebody else for all you can tell, that they are creative to any extent; but it does mean that steady, concentrated thought creates in you that of which you think. Hence, the constant advice by the instructed Theosophists: "Do not think of your faults, think of the opposite virtues." Now it is quite true that in estimating your character you must originally try to make an impartial judgment of your own character. See the qualities in which you are strong, and do not have the false humility of saying that you are weak in these. Also see the qualities in which you are weak; recognise the fact, but when you have once done that, then you should carry on that admirable habit of thinking of the opposite virtues of your weaknesses.

Suppose you are timid; do not say to yourself: "I am so timid," but think about Strength. If you are inaccurate—as almost every one is until they have begun to eradicate it by careful thinking—do not think: "How inaccurate I am," but think upon Truth. And if you want it in a form which would help you, there is no better form than to realise that the God in you shows forth all the virtues, and to say, if you like, in your morning prayer or meditation: "The SELF is fearless; I am the SELF; I am fearless." "The SELF is Truth; I am the SELF; I am Truth." And I can tell you from my own experience that, if you do that regularly, morning after morning, in a very short time you will find that the weakness that

you discovered is disappearing and is replaced by the opposite strength; so that you can definitely build up the character, bit by bit, virtue by virtue. Do not try and think perfection at once, because that is so vague; you will never get on with it; but take virtue after virtue and steadily persist until the weakness has become a strength, and your character will grow very, very much faster than by continually lamenting over your weakness.

Now it is characteristic of the Liberal Catholic Church that it has nothing of this bemoaning of oneself, but, on the contrary, a joyous confidence that, man being divine, he can gradually unfold the Divinity within himself; and all through that Liturgy there is no word of the fear of God, but all joy in God. At least, there they have realised the thought that "Perfect Love casteth out Fear," and when, in addition to that character of its public Liturgy, you find that the Occult parts of other Liturgies are retained—belief in the invisible worlds, a real belief in the invisible Presences so constantly appealed to in the Liturgy of every Religion, and of course in the Liturgies of the Christian Church—then you gradually come really to believe in them and to understand how true it is that those invisible Beings are the helpers of mankind.

Now I know that is a truth found in every Religion, but how far it is believed in, people who hold it must judge for themselves. I have very often thought, in talking with people, that while they ask those invisible Beings to help them and to take part in their worship, they would be probably more alarmed than delighted if they became visibly present in the Church. And it is rather a curious form of belief, if you will permit me to say so, that invites the co-operation of the Angels, and leaves one very much in doubt whether their presence would be welcome if they appeared as visible to mortal eyes. And I think the value of this

particular form of Christianity is very largely in the reality that it gradually brings into the hearts and the lives of the people who take part in its services. And one other point of vital importance is that it does not exclude the non-members of the Church from taking part in its great central service of the Eucharist. I have seen a Hindu kneeling at the Eucharist in that Church. I have seen a Buddhist receiving there the Communion. If a man of any Faith is earnest and devoted, then he can look up to the World Teacher as being really at the head of every Faith. He spoke not long ago of "My many Faiths." On earth the Christ said: "Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd" (S. John x. 16). And so it is true that the great inspiration of the Christ breathes through every Faith, and vitalises every religious rite properly and with devotion performed. And the Buddhist may remain a Buddhist and yet lift up his heart to Him, whom you call the Christ, but whom he calls the "Buddha-to-be," or the "Bodhisattva." The Hindu can do the same, though to him the name of the World Teacher is the great "Rishi Maitreya," the Lord of Compassion; so that there is nothing incongruous to the true Theosophist, who believes that all Religions came from the one source, from the World Teacher, Who comes to His world from time to time, when humanity needs a fresh impulse; nothing incongruous in Hindu or Buddhist or Parsî or Musalmân kneeling at one Altar at least in Christendom where men and women of every faith are welcome, if they come in the spirit of devotion and of love.

Passing from that to the Third Movement that received this Benediction of the World Teacher, the Co-Masonic Movement, you may be a little more puzzled perhaps why He has uttered a special Benediction on

that. The reason, however, is not far to seek. Of all the great Initiations of the Mysteries of the past, you have in Masonry, speaking generally now, a faint reproduction; faint, because only in allegory and in symbol, and because those who belong to the ordinary masculine Masonry are more apt—though not in all cases by any means—to trace it to what is called "Operative Masonry," Guilds of the Middle Ages, Guilds sometimes of ancient Rome, those are recognised as having part in its shaping. But if I may speak with all respect of a great Masonic Institution, in Masculine Masonry they leave out two things of the greatest interest to human life, and a third thing that makes difficult the working of the Ceremonies, for a very definite reason. As many of you, I dare say, know, because many of you may belong to the masculine Order of Masonry, the discussion of Politics and the discussion of Religion, these discussions are forbidden in Lodge. The motive, I believe, is to prevent quarrelling or division in what is recognised as a Brotherhood. But these are the two most vital subjects in human life; Religion, the spiritual life of human beings and of the world; Politics, the methods by which Nations can increase in happiness, in prosperity and in right feeling.

If Masonry does not promote right action in Politics, right knowledge in Religion, surely then it throws away a tremendous weapon which can be used for the helping of the Nations.

And the third lack that it has is in the exclusion of women, and it is there that Co-Masonry is so peculiarly useful. You might as well try to see as well with one eye as with two, as to think that you can judge of human affairs and human questions where only one of the two sexes is concerned. Masonry ought to be a power which should teach the great lessons of human equality in a right sense, and not in the foolish sense

in which it is so often taught in modern democracy; for as it is there taught it has no existence in Nature, as everybody knows when they begin to think. Children are not born equal in that sense; for they are very different in quality, very different in character—one a congenital criminal and another a little saint from the cradle. Nor are they born equal either in circumstances or in opportunities, or, what is more important, the power to grasp opportunities when opportunities come in their way. But there is an equality, a true equality which all should recognise, that all are equal in the Divinity of their own Nature, and will be equal in the end, when the Inner Ruler Immortal is Master of the whole life.

And in this question of the exclusion of women, you have this to think of: that a Nation belonging to both sexes, as otherwise the Nation could hardly continue long, has to deal with many, many questions affecting both, and that the simile of the two eyes I used is a very, very exact one. For when you have two eyes, you see a little bit farther round an object than when you have only the one available, and you cannot judge distance if you only have one eye; both are wanted. And in those subjects which touch the life of the Nation, the matters that are dealt with by human beings in their Legislative Assemblies, and so on, you need the two human "eyes" in order to judge fairly all those questions; and that has been forgotten in Masonry.

Now I am perfectly well aware that there are some institutions in which a distinction is made as to sex, and rightly in those cases, because of the special work that has to be done; but difference of avocation is not considered in Masonry. If it is really anything, it is a presentment by symbol and by legend of the great fundamental truths of human life and human evolution; and therefore, just as in the great Mysteries—of

which its forms are really the vessels surviving—no distinction of sex is permitted; and because of that fact in what we call Co-Masonry, it came into the position of being a possible instrument for helping in the evolution of mankind, helping in their evolution in matters of government, of social order; helping in their evolution into the really Universal Brotherhood which it proclaims.

The difficulty in the French Masonry, where this Movement originated (Le Droit Humain) was that, because of religious differences and the spread of scientific materialism, they left out that universal landmark of Masonry, the recognition of the great Architect of the Universe. But when some of us here, Theosophists, became Masons, taking our Initiations, as we had to do, from France, we said quite frankly that we could do nothing in England unless that great Landmark were restored, that we believed in that Existence; and as they were willing to accept us believing in It, it was necessary that we should be given perfect freedom to use His Name in our Rituals and to acknowledge His Power in our workings. So that, in this respect, our English Co-Masonry differs from the French; but I believe that there are now some Co-Masons there, who are again beginning to recognise that great Foundation Stone of the Masonic Temple. Certainly, so far as we are concerned, we follow in that the English use, and not the French. Now the value of that, I submit to you, is very great in Politics. It teaches that you may reconcile equality of nature with a Hierarchical Order; that Wisdom is that which really has the right and the duty of ruling; that ignorance cannot guide wisely the affairs of Nations, any more than the affairs of any ordinary business of a single individual; and that, therefore, in Nations there should be recognised that Hierarchical Order of great human qualities, which make people fit

to be the guides of their Nation, enables them to be true leaders of men.

And it seems to me that along these lines Masonry has much to teach the growing democracies of the modern world, as all point to the value of wisdom, the value of strength, the value of beauty in the national life. Those great national characteristics are the characteristics, remember, most prominent in our thoughts of the Great Architect of the Universe; these, reproduced in human society, will build up a Nation beautiful in its surroundings, cultured in its thought, promoting strength of character, evolving wisdom and understanding in the relations between its members. And it is along those lines more and more, I hope, that all Masons will learn to work; and since the Movement that admits women to a perfect equality with men uses similar Rituals, similar Obligations and similar Symbols, there may gradually come back to the world those great Mysteries of ancient days that were the inspirers of philosophy, teachers of the spirituality of Religion, and the Guides and the Helpers of men, by the development of the qualities that make a man fit to lead and to be recognised by his fellows as a natural and trained and cultured leader; that we may see, gradually appearing in our world, Literature, deep and splendid in its thought, as were the great Literatures of the Faiths of the world; and Art as wonderful in its beauty as the remains of past civilisations show us Art has been, so that even the broken remains of its statues and its buildings are placed in our museums as models of beauty, of grace, of dignity and of power. Nothing save that recognition of the Inner Life of man; nothing save the recognition that the Divine Architect lives in every one of the things that He has made, and pours down His strength on those who open their hearts to receive it; nothing else than that will save modern civilisation from the

destruction that fell upon one ancient civilisation after another; and it is as a helper of these great Movements, bringing back to modern civilisation what it has so rashly cast away, it is in that, I believe, that the greatest use of the Theosophical Society depends. These are the things which it was founded to proclaim; these are the things of which to-day it should be a willing witness; and I trust that very soon the Society will itself declare that to be its mission, and so open a better and a happier path for the Nations of the World to tread.

APPENDIX

(*Ex Lucifer*, Vol. III, No. 14, page 176. Dated London, October 15, 1888.)

THE ESOTERIC SECTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY.

Owing to the fact that a large number of Fellows of the Society have felt the necessity for the formation of a body of Esoteric students, to be organised on the ORIGINAL LINES devised by the *real* founders of the T.S., the following order has been issued by the President-Founder :—

I. To promote the esoteric interests of the Theosophical Society by the deeper study of esoteric philosophy, there is hereby organised a body, to be known as the "Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society."

II. The constitution and sole direction of the same is vested in Madame H. P. Blavatsky, as its Head ; she is solely responsible to the Members for results ; and the section has no official or corporate connection with the Exoteric Society save in the person of the President-Founder.

III. Persons wishing to join the Section, and willing to abide by its rules, should communicate directly with: Madame H. P. Blavatsky, 17, Lansdown Road, Holland Park, London, W.

(*Signed*) H. S. Olcott,
President-in-Council.

Attest:—H. P. Blavatsky.

See *Old Diary Leaves*, H. S. Olcott, Fourth Series, page 60.)

Notice *re* Formation of Esoteric Section.

The notice there is attested by H. P. Blavatsky as Corresponding Secretary, and gives a full account of the event.